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AIRBORNE ALERT

One of the problems that has received considerable attention from individual services, the Joint Staff and persons responsible for military decisions is the need for and capability of a United States airborne alert.

Such a program required evaluation to determine the military requirement for such an alert, the resultant effect on the long term readiness of the forces used in its execution, its cost and relationship to other existing or developing military requirements.

Quite sometime ago it was agreed that there is a military requirement for a force capable of carrying out an airborne alert. Since the Air Force has publicly cited the chance of 300 Soviet missiles destroying our retaliatory bombers on the ground, such an alert should be imposed during periods of strained U.S. - Soviet relations or strategic warnings, so long as the manned bomber retains its predominant role in United States retaliatory forces.

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SECRET

SAC has ably demonstrated with an evaluation training program that it has available the capability to support an air alert of 8 combat configured aircraft per wing per day, for such periods.

An effective, continuous airborne alert involving one-fourth of the United States heavy bomber force would be very expensive to maintain and would rapidly deteriorate existing equipment. This might invite Soviet attack timed to a period of material weaknesses derived from intelligence.

The resultant replacement of equipment and an increased training program for bomber and tanker crews would involve expenses that must detract from other Air Force programs under the present level funding budget concept.

Costs for a continuous airborne alert employing 10 wings were developed for several schemes which would progress from an original effort of 6 sorties per day per wing (60 sorties daily). After 3 months of growth a 9 sorties per day per wing program could be carried out for 12 months for \$553 million. A second scheme would provide for 11.2 sorties per day per wing (112 sorties per day) and after 6 months buildup would cost \$770.8 million each year.

The recently demonstrated high accuracy, long-range firings of ATLAS, TITAN and POLARIS indicate that any additional funds

SECRET

should not be programmed for manned intercontinental bombers but should be diverted toward development of other nuclear retaliatory capabilities. There is a need for systems that will be effective even in event of surprise attack. The increasing Soviet ICBM deterioration of the deterrent effectiveness of land based manned bombers is the long term threat that must be prepared for.

In the annual budget message to Congress an airborne alert program aimed at acquiring and preserving the necessary capability proportional to the military requirements was outlined by the President. He said, "I have also authorized the Department of Defense to begin to acquire a standby airborne alert capability for the heavy bombers. This will entail the procurement of extra engines and spare parts, and the training of the heavy bomber wings with the ability to conduct an airborne alert. It is neither necessary nor practical to fly a continuous airborne alert at this time. Such a procedure would, over a relatively short period of time, seriously degrade our overall capability to respond to attack. What I am recommending is a capability to fly such an alert if the need should arise and to maintain that alert for a reasonable period of time until the situation which necessitated it becomes clarified".

SECRET

CONSIDERATIONS OF PREVENTIVE WAR, PREEMPTIVE WAR, AND
TAKING THE INITIATIVE

There have been a lot of discussions in lots of newspapers and periodicals about preemptive war. There have also been a lot of discussions among the Services here in Washington about the differences between preemptive war, preventive war and exercising the initiative. In other words, to get my own thinking straight I have written the following treatise which you may find of some interest.

As ICBM's become operational warning times are reduced to the point where a hair trigger seems to be the solution for launching our strategic attack forces.

One school of thought insists that there is a clear differentiation between preventive war or acts intended to provoke war on the one side and the exercise of initiative on the other side. Although superficial examination of this difference might seem to indicate that the differentiation is very small, it may on the other hand be quite significant and may portend a trend which could lead to a military posture of the U.S. that would be dangerous to the security of our country.

A preventive war is a war initiated by a country because it believes that the initiation of war is necessary to its interests. In other words, that country is trying to prevent an expansion or domination by its enemies or it is trying to dominate or control some

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SECRET

other country. It is a deliberate thing. A nation which decides to conduct a preventive war will decide upon the means by which it will conduct it, the number and quality of weapons that it requires, and probably will designate a time for starting such a war. All preparations will be made for conducting a war of a certain predetermined type at a certain date in order to achieve specific results.

Preemptive war while very similar to a preventive war in several facets is just a little bit different. A preemptive war would be initiated by a nation when it felt sure that its enemy was about to strike. In other words, a nation would initiate a preemptive war when it had determined that its enemy was about to conduct a preventive war. It would be done with the weapons it had on hand. It would be done at a time which primarily would be dependent upon what its enemy did. A nation which decided upon preemptive war would be primarily influenced by its belief that its enemy was about to strike it. In order for the nation to survive it would have to conduct a preemptive war to prevent the aggressor nation from initiating the first strike.

The difference between preventive war and preemptive war then is largely a matter of what triggers the war. A preventive

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SECRET

war is based upon a coldly calculated date. A preemptive war is based upon what a nation believes its enemy is about to do.

The acceptance of dependence on either a preventive war or preemptive war can be dangerous for any nation. The reason for this is that weapons systems would then be so designed as to be of maximum usefulness for that type of war. A nation adopting this as a basic national policy would not be ready to accept the first blow. It would expect to initiate war. It would expect to get the jump on the other nation. It would expect to devastate the other nation before it is devastated.

Although a preventive war would be determined largely upon intelligence data, a preemptive war is absolutely dependent upon having intelligence information. The accuracy of intelligence from a prospective enemy becomes of paramount importance in a preemptive war. A nation whose policy was to conduct a preemptive war would have to be very certain that its intelligence was correct and that it was not rigged or unduly influenced one way or the other even by its own nationals. Such a nation would have to make sure that double agents and false information and all the other tricks of the subtle, devious intelligence trade were screened out and that it actually had solid intelligence that the enemy proposed to strike. So far

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such intelligence data has not been possible to achieve. No nation has ever had such positive information that it could act with certainty. This was borne out even in World War II when if there ever was such positive information we had it.

The execution of both preventive war and preemptive war would depend primarily upon weapons of mass destruction to destroy the enemy's capability so completely that the enemy could not in turn wreak significant damage upon the nation initiating such a war. This is hard to do against a country in which the location of missile launchers will not be known. It is impossible to do against such weapons systems as the Polaris weapons system.

The important thing in both of these wars is for the nation who initiates such a war to be able to insure that it can actually destroy the enemy's military capability without itself receiving disastrous damage.

The "exercise of the initiative" is a little bit different still. The exercise of the initiative also means that when a nation is convinced that the enemy is about to attack, it will exercise the initiative and attack the enemy. This is preemptive war. It is a synonym for preemptive war but using more gentle language and leaving out the term "war". It might mean that the ruler of a nation exercises the initiative to attack when he is positively convinced, i.e.,

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when he is certain that an attack is imminent. Certainly a ruler, if he were convinced that the enemy was going to attack his country, should not sit on his hands until the bombs or missiles actually arrive. Certainly too a ruler who is not sure that bombs and missiles were heading his way would not want to initiate the destruction of half the world. He would have to be positive. He would have to know. He would have to be convinced. He could not take the chance of initiating such a nuclear war just because he "thought" that his country was about to be attacked. His intelligence sources would have to be good indeed. They would not only have to be good, he would have to have absolute, complete confidence in their accuracy.

It is of course, necessary, as stated before, that a ruler exercising the initiative when he is convinced his nation is about to be attacked must do everything he possibly can to inflict the maximum amount of damage on the enemy and at the same time must protect his own country as best he can. There should be no restriction on this. At the same time, the ruler must be certain that he himself is not initiating a war which would not otherwise occur.

If a country places too much reliance upon being able to "exercise initiative" or "conduct a preemptive war" it places too great a dependence upon the reliability and effectiveness of its

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intelligence system. It also creates a philosophy which may generate weapons systems that are not usable for other situations and--i.e. would not be effective if the initiative were not exercised or if this was not a preemptive or a preventive war.

What is needed instead are weapons systems which could not be destroyed by the enemy no matter what he does. This will eliminate any "hair trigger" response as being necessary. What is needed is the ability to confront an aggressor with graduated power sufficient to deter, to prevent him from conducting any kind of a successful war. In other words, we must make certain that if the enemy wants to start a war his country surely will be destroyed. This comes from invulnerable weapons systems which the enemy cannot destroy if he exercises the initiative or conducts a preemptive war or preventive war.

We use the word "invulnerable" in connection with the Global Fleet Ballistic Missile System. Of course, there are no degrees of invulnerability. If a system is invulnerable it is invulnerable and it cannot be just a little invulnerable. Any single Fleet Ballistic Missile submarine is of course vulnerable to counteraction of one kind or another. This vulnerability of the single FBM submarine is of a small order but there are possibilities of sinking it under

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some conditions. However, the Global Fleet Ballistic Missile System as a whole is invulnerable because not all Polaris submarines can be sunk at once. This differs from land-based systems in fixed known locations because if the enemy has enough missiles all fixed missile sites in known locations can be destroyed at once. Hence, it is proper to say that the Global Fleet Ballistic System is invulnerable but it would not be proper to say that a Fleet Ballistic Missile submarine is invulnerable. This is a fine distinction perhaps but it is necessary to make that distinction in view of the care with which other agencies go over our statements.

In summary, the key to true deterrence lies in the inevitability of ruinous retaliation. This, in turn, depends on the ability of the retaliatory force to survive and function as a striking force. The ability to retaliate with constantly deployed naval striking forces, carriers, missile ships, and POLARIS submarines, will exist before, during, or after any attack launched by an aggressor. The Polaris-loaded submarine entirely hidden and moving quietly beneath the sea, is in fact virtually invulnerable. It cannot be zeroed-in for destruction. The individual ship is practically immune from detection. To find quickly and to destroy even a significant percentage of the deployed force is impossible. Starting a preventive war, therefore, in the

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face of their retaliatory ability would be suicide. This same invulnerability provides time for development of any situation and for decision, thereby relieving the pressure to initiate preemptive war. No hair-trigger decision based on real or fancied intelligence is necessary. The ability to retaliate will exist before, during, or after any attack launched by an aggressor.

Polaris submarines will remain on station at all times, whether we are at peace or engaged in conflict short of general war. Their operation will entail coordination with other ships, continuous movement, defense against enemy submarines, and intermingling with other friendly submarines. Their safety and effectiveness must not be jeopardized. Accordingly, the Unified Commander controlling all other friendly Naval forces in an area must also control the Polaris submarines. Our naval component commanders controlling other major naval forces assigned to currently established Unified Commands now have the authority, experience, and organizational machinery to accomplish this. It is clearly recognized that the number of Polaris submarines deployed, and the targets they are assigned, must be coordinated with other U.S. Strategic Forces . . . This coordination belongs at the highest level - the Joint Chiefs of Staff; through them this widely dispersed deterrent will also be directly responsive to the will of the Chief Executive.

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